



# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
Capitol Reef National Park  
HC 70 Box 15  
Torrey, Utah 84775



IN REPLY REFER TO:  
10B

March 18, 2022

To: Capitol Reef National Park Central Files

From: Superintendent, Capitol Reef National Park

Subject: 36 CFR Section 1.5 – Closure and Public Use Limits – Cassidy Arch Canyon and Shinob Canyon Mexican Spotted Owl Closure

The Mexican spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis lucida*) is listed as “Threatened” by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under provisions of the Endangered Species Act. Cassidy Arch and Shinob Canyons are within Mexican Spotted Owl Critical Habitat and are within designated a Protected Activity Center (PACs). A breeding pair of Mexican spotted owls was detected in both Cassidy Arch and Shinob Canyons in 2021, including 3 fledglings. A pair of Mexican spotted owls was detected in Cassidy Arch and Shinob Canyons just this week (3/12/2022).

Cassidy Arch Canyon and Shinob Canyon are all publicized canyoneering routes. Any level of human disturbance in these canyons during the breeding season could cause adverse impacts to Mexican spotted owls occupying these areas. Management recommendations in the 2012 Mexican Spotted Owl Recovery Plan include closures during the breeding season where recreation disturbance to breeding owls seems likely.

Attempts will be made during April through July to determine whether a breeding pair is present in these canyons. If it is determined that a canyon is unoccupied or is occupied by a single owl rather than by a breeding pair, the closure for that canyon may be lifted.

## Determination:

The Superintendent has determined that hiking/canyoneering in Cassidy Arch and Shinob Canyons poses a significant threat of disruption to the Mexican spotted owls, and therefore the areas listed below are closed to the public, effective immediately, until August 31, 2022, the end of the owl’s breeding season:

**Cassidy Arch Canyon:** Specifically, the canyoneering route known as Cassidy Arch Canyon including all tributaries into Cassidy Arch Canyon.

**Shinob Canyon:** Specifically, the canyoneering routes known as Na-gah, Timpie, and Nighthawk that descend into Shinob Canyon.

Susan Fritzke  
Superintendent